

REMARKS

Initially, applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the helpful and courteous telephonic interview he conducted with applicant's undersigned representative on or about April 18, 2004. The application of the prior art references, especially Shiota et al., to the independent claims was discussed. The Examiner indicated that: he considers the Shiota reference to be particularly relevant to the embodiments of the present invention including penetrating portions, and that it is his opinion that it would have been obvious to persons of ordinary skill in the art to move Shiota's cylindrical cloth to any portion of the airbag, such as discussed in the In re Japiske discussed at item 8 of the Office Action. In response to the representative's discussion that the claimed feature of forming a joint portion by sewing the upper and lower exterior airbag panels together is much simpler, efficient and cost effective than Shiota's cylindrical cloth, the Examiner indicated that a claim directed to such feature might receive favorable consideration, especially where the location of the joint portion is also more clearly specified, e.g., in a neck region of the airbag adjacent the opening through which gas from the inflator flows into the airbag. However, no agreement was reached.

Upon entry of the present Amendment, claims 21 and 23 remain in the application, of which claims 21 and 23 are independent.

Claims 21, and 23 are amended herein by being rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the claims from which they formerly depended. Also these claims are amended to overcome the Examiner's rejection under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, by deleting the term "appropriate" and further defining that the term "narrow" is used relative to the occupant restraint portion. The remaining claims, 1-3, 5-9, 12-20, and 22, are cancelled herein without prejudice and without dedication or

abandonment of the subject matter thereof.

The applicant respectfully submits that the above amendments are fully supported by the original disclosure, including the original claims, and do not introduce any new matter into the application. Still further, applicant respectfully submits that the above amendments do not raise any new issues for consideration by the Examiner, again, because they simply involve rewriting two dependent claims in independent form, and by making minor changes intended to overcome the rejection under 35 USC 112, second paragraph.

In view of the above amendments, the rejection of claims 1-3, 5-9 and 12-23 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, is believed to be overcome, and it is respectfully requested that the rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication at item 9 of the Office Action that claims 21 and 23 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form and to overcome the rejection under 35 USC 112, second paragraph. . The applicant has amended claims 21 and 23 herein in accordance with the Examiners suggestions, and thus claims 21 and 23 are in condition for immediate allowance.

The above-identified Office Action has been reviewed, the references carefully considered, and the Examiner's comments carefully weighed. In view thereof, the present Amendment is submitted.

Conclusion

In conclusion, applicant has overcome the Examiner's rejections as presented in the Office Action; and moreover, applicant has considered all of the references of record,

and it is respectfully submitted that the invention as defined by each of the present claims is clearly patentably distinct thereover.

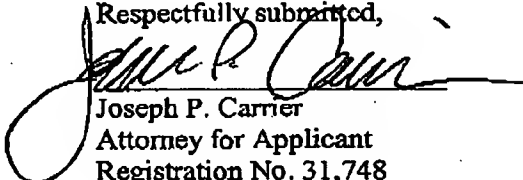
The application is now believed to be in condition for allowance, and a notice to this effect is earnestly solicited.

If the Examiner is not fully convinced of all of the claims now in the application, applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner telephonically contact applicant's undersigned representative to expeditiously resolve prosecution of the application.

Entry of the present Amendment is respectfully requested under 37 CFR 1.116 on the grounds that: the Amendment merely adopt the Examiner's suggestions for making the claims more definite and for placing claims in allowable form; the number of issues is greatly reduced; and the Amendment is believed to place the application in condition for allowance.

Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being transmitted via facsimile to the US Patent & Trademark Office, Art Unit 3616, on June 15, 2005.

